AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EXERCISE Ace

Whole-body Exercise Band Workout

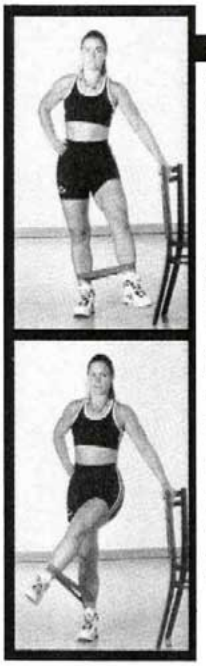
Exercise bands are great exercise accessories. Not only are they portable and easy to use, they're extremely effective for developing muscular strength and endurance.

And, as we show you here, it's easy to get a whole-body workout. Ten to 20 minutes, twice a week is all you need to build and maintain muscular strength and endurance.

Complete one or more sets of 20 repetitions of each of the following exercises. Proper form is essential. Follow the directions given and concentrate on performing each exercise in a slow and controlled manner while using a relaxed grip. Once the exercises begin to feel too easy, you may need to graduate to a band with greater resistance.

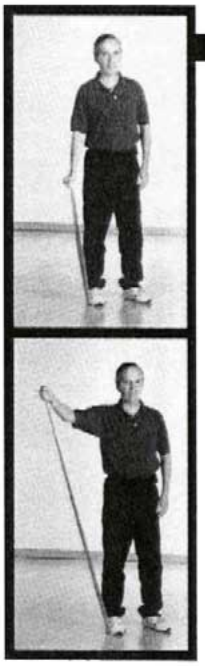
1. Leg Abduction

Stand behind a chair and step both feet inside the loop and position around your ankles. Place your hand on the chair for support and balance. Maintaining erect posture with contracted abdominals, shift your body weight onto leg closest to the chair. Keep supporting leg softly bent at the knee throughout the exercise. Flex your foot and lift your outer leg out as far as comfortably possible, keeping the hip and shoulder stationary. Slowly lower and repeat.



3. Leg Adduction

Stand behind a chair and step both feet inside the loop and position around your ankles. Place your hand on the chair for support and balance. Maintaining erect posture with contracted abdominals, shift your body weight onto leg furthest from the chair. Keep this leg softly bent at the knee throughout the exercise. With your foot flexed and toes pointed outward, lift the leg closest to the chair slightly forward. From this starting position, cross the leg in front of the body, leading with the heel. Keep the hips and shoulders stable as you slowly return to the starting position and repeat.

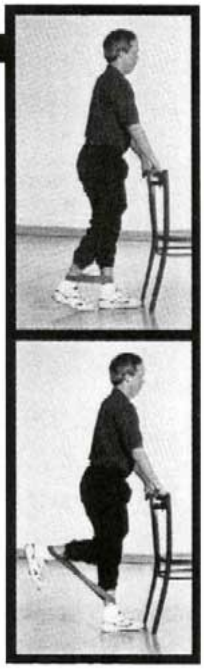


5. Lateral Raise

Stand with feet shoulder width apart and place one end of the band under the right foot. Comfortably grasp the other end of the band in the right hand, maintaining a slight bend in the elbow. Position the right arm straight down from the shoulder with the thumb pointing forward. Keep your knees soft, your posture erect and abdominals contracted. Lift your arm laterally to shoulder height, keeping your wrist firm, thumb pointed up and palm facing forward. Slowly lower and repeat.

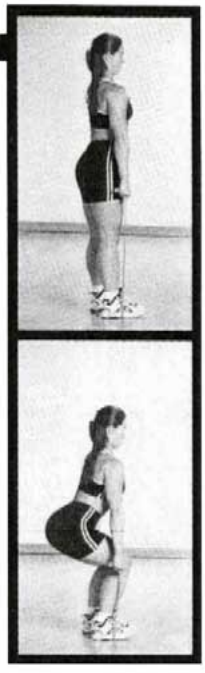
2. Hamstring Curl

Stand behind a chair, placing one or both hands on it for balance. Step both feet inside the loop and position around your ankles. With good posture and contracted abdominals, shift your body weight on to one leg. Keep supporting leg softly bent at the knee throughout the exercise. With knees aligned and foot flexed, contract the hamstring and bend your "free" leg ninety degrees toward the buttocks. Slowly return to starting position and repeat.



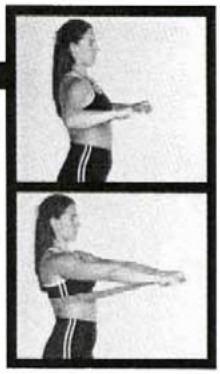
4. Squat

Stand with feet approximately shoulder-width apart. Place the band under the arches of both feet, holding the ends comfortably in each hand. Look at a point slightly higher than your head and contract your abdominals to maintain proper posture. Bend your knees until your upper legs are just above parallel in relation to the floor. Keep your heels down, your body weight over the ankles and your abdominals tight with your low back in a natural arch. Make sure you can see your toes as you bend your knees. Return to starting position and repeat.



6. Chest Press

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, knees soft, posture erect and abdominals tight. Grasp the ends of the band in both hands and place behind your back, under the arms, at chest level. Bend and raise your elbows to chest level. Keeping your wrists firm and palms parallel with the floor, extend your arms straight in front of the body; do not lock out the elbows. Return to starting position and repeat.



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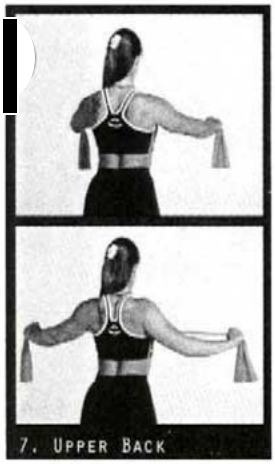
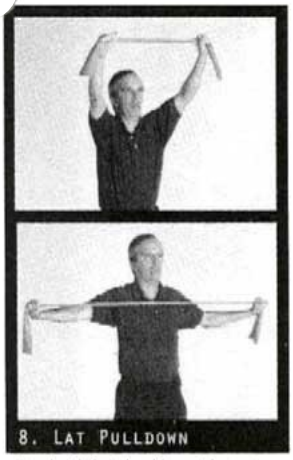


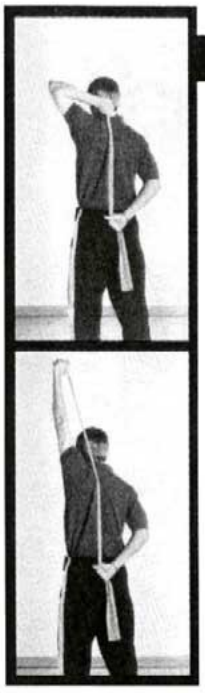
7. Upper Back

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, knees soft, posture erect and abdominals tight. Grasp the band so hands are slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. With your palms facing the floor, bend your elbows and lift your arms to chest height. Expand your chest and pull your shoulder blades back and together. Keep your lower body stationary and maintain good posture throughout the exercise. Return to starting position and repeat.



8. Lat Pulldown

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, knees soft and abdominals tight. Grasp the band so hands are slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. Lift your arms just above your head, palms facing front; look straight ahead. Extend arms laterally at shoulder height with firm wrists and slightly bent elbows. Pull your shoulder blades back and together and expand the chest. Return to starting position and repeat.

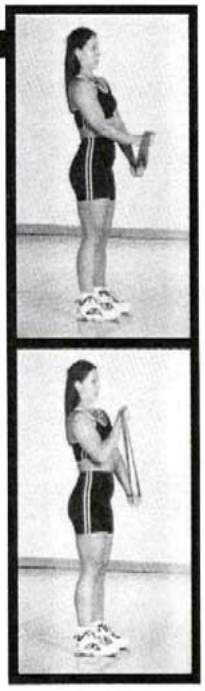


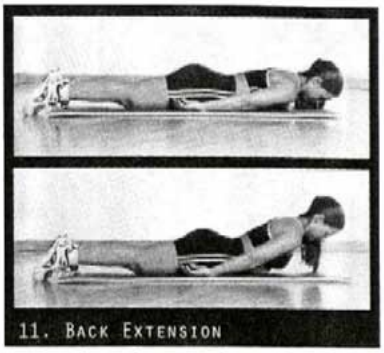
9. Triceps Extension

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, knees soft and abdominals tight. Grasp the band on either end, placing one hand behind your back with the back of your hand against your waistline, and the other hand at the back of your neck with your thumb pointing down. There should be no slack in the tube, so adjust as necessary to create a slight tautness. Keeping your hand stationary at the waist, extend the top arm above your head by moving just the elbow; your shoulder should remain stable in order to isolate the triceps muscle. Keep your hand directly over your shoulder, so your palm faces forward and your knuckles face the ceiling. Slowly lower and repeat.

10. Biceps Curl

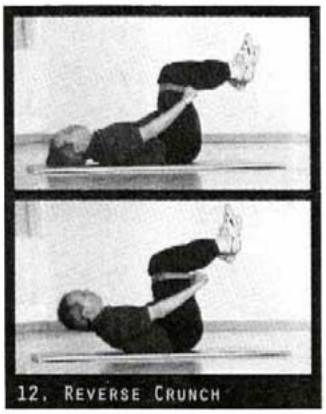
Stand comfortably with feet shoulder-width apart, knees soft and abdominals tight. Grasp the loop in front of you with both hands, keeping your left hand slightly below waist level with palm facing down, and your right hand just above it with palm facing up. Tuck your right elbow in close to your side. Without moving your left arm, bend your right elbow and bring your palm up until it is facing the front of your left shoulder, with your thumb pointing out and away from the body. Be sure to keep your wrist straight. Slowly lower and repeat.





11. Back Extension

Lie face down with your arms by your sides, palms facing up and legs extended and relaxed. Hold your head up slightly or rest your forehead on the floor. Relax your shoulders into the floor, but keep your abdominals tight. Contract the gluteals and use your lower back muscles to slowly lift your shoulders and chest off the floor. Lower and repeat.



12. Reverse Crunch

Lie on your back with your thighs perpendicular to the floor and your knees bent at a 90 degree angle. Grasp the loop in both hands and place it on the front of your thighs just above the knees. Position hands against the outside of your thighs, palms facing the floor as they hold the band. Rest your head, neck, shoulders and lower back on the floor. This is your starting position. Contract your abdominals, roll your hips up and bring knees toward your face as you lift the upper body slightly off the floor. With each crunch, press your hands toward the feet, pushing against the resistance of the loop. Try to relax your shoulders and neck and don't lock out your elbows. Return to starting position and repeat.

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